1688 F.C.17-5

The particular Excellence and true *State of the*
BATH INFIRMARY.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED

At the ABBY-CHURCH, at BATH,

On SUNDAY, *April* 22, 1759;

For the Support of the *General Hoſpital* or *Infirmary*
In that CITY.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the GOVERNORS of the ſaid HOSPITAL.

BY

R. OLIVE, A. M. Vicar of BURNHAM.

To which is added,

A ſhort ACCOUNT of the STATE of the HOSPITAL,
As it ſtood MAY 1, 1759.

BRISTOL:
Printed by E. FARLEY and SON, for Mr. LEAKE, of *Bath*; and ſold by the Bookſellers of *Bath* and *Briſtol*.

Price SIX-PENCE.

15 93

A

SERMON,

PREACHED

At the ABBY-CHURCH, at BATH,

On SUNDAY, April 22, 1750;

For the Support of the General Hospital or Infirmary

In that CITY.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Published at the Request of the Governors of the said HOSPITAL.

BY

R. OLIVE, A.M. Vicar of DURNHAM.

Printed by E. FARLEY and Son, for Mr. LEAKE, of Bath; and sold
by the Booksellers of Bath and Bristol.

Price Six-Pence.

TO THE

PRESIDENT *and* GOVERNORS,

OF THE

GENERAL-HOSPITAL, in *Bath*;

THIS

DISCOURSE,

IS,

With great HUMILITY and RESPECT,

INSCRIBED,

By their moſt obliged,

And obedient humble Servant,

R. OLIVE.

DISCOURSE

TO THE

PRESIDENT AND GOVERNORS

OF THE

GENERAL HOSPITAL at BATH.

TO THE READER.

NEED *the Reader be told that by contributing towards the Support of the excellent Charity this Diſcourſe was written to promote and ſerve, he would in a particular Manner oblige the Author of it?---A much higher Conſideration and Motive will, I truſt, induce him to do it--Namely, that by ſhewing Mercy and Pity to the poor diſtreſſed Members of* CHRIST, *on a Principle of Love and Obedience to Him, he will approve himſelf his Diſciple indeed, and aſſuredly recommend himſelf to the Arms of his Mercy.*

THE Benevolent may be aſſured, that whatever Contributions ſhall be depoſited in the Hands of the

Author,

Author, for the Benefit of the General-Hoſpital, at BATH, *ſhall be faithfully paid in by him to the Treaſurers of it, who (we have all the Security that Integrity and Honour can give us) will as faithfully apply them.*

10 JA 66

ISAIAH, Chap. lv. Verſe 1.

Ho! every one that thirſteth come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money;---come ye, buy and eat; yea come buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price.

I SHALL no ſooner have recited theſe Words than it will, I preſume, occur to thoſe who hear me, that *Iſaiah* does here, in his Prophetic Manner, perſonate the *Meſſiah*, and declare to the World the wonders of his Love towards the Children of Men.--And this he does by a very beautiful Metaphor;--in which is convey'd to us a ſtrong Idea of our Wants, repreſented by Thirſt; one perhaps of the moſt excruciating

Paſſions,

Paſſions,--our Inability of ourſelves to procure or purchaſe what may ſatisfy that Paſſion;--and his adorable Benevolence in his Readineſs to relieve us from our Diſtreſs:--Nay his Calling on us with an Expreſſion of Eagerneſs--Ho! every one that thirſteth, ſaith *He*, come ye to the Waters;--as if *He* ſhould be more deſirous to *give*, than *we*, thirſty as we are, ſhould be to *receive* thoſe bountiful Draughts of his Mercy and Goodneſs, which are alone able to refreſh our Souls and enliven our Spirits.--And give me leave to add that the *Meſſiah*, when He was come into the World,--in order to vindicate this prophetical Metaphor made uſe of by his Servant *Iſaiah*, and to confirm the Intention of it, expreſs'd himſelf to the People in the very ſelf-ſame Phraſe: For as * St. *John* informs us, *in the laſt Day that great Day of the Feaſt*, JESUS *ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any Man thirſteth let him come unto*

* Chap. vii.—Verſe 37.

unto me and drink.--In all which it is very evident that the Benefits, which are here metaphorically promiſed and offer'd unto Mankind, are to be underſtood in a ſpiritual Senſe:--The *Thirſt* is that of the Soul, which longeth after Salvation, *as the Hart longeth after the Water-Brooks.*--And the Waters to which we are ſo affectionately called, are thoſe Living Waters which refreſh and invigorate all the Faculties of the Soul; that Influx of divine Truth, of which *He, who drinketh ſhall never thirſt.*---The *Wine* that is purchaſed for us, what does it denote but the Grace and Comfort of the Holy Spirit? And the *Milk* what is it, but the pure Food of our Souls, the ſincere Word of GOD.--This I ſay is the Firſt and original Intention of my Text:--and bleſſed be GOD who hath thus graciouſly and undeſervedly called us by his Son, to the Participation of thoſe ſpiritual *Waters* which flow from *Him*, who is *the Rock of our Salvation*; the Waters which our Fa-

thers

thers of old drank by Faith; For *they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was* CHRIST.--A moſt ſignificative Antitype of that Relief from the Agonies of *Thirſt* which GOD's People received, *when Moſes in the Wilderneſs ſtruck the Rock*, and the Waters guſhed *out, and ran in dry Places like a River*.--Nor are our Undeſervings, our Incapacity to procure thoſe Bleſſings for ourſelves leſs properly expreſs'd by the Poverty of thoſe who are called!--and HE *that hath no Money, come ye buy and eat, yea buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price*.--How does this at once remind us of our own Inſufficiency, and enhance the Generoſity and Affection of our gracious Redeemer, who of his own Good-will, ſupplieth our Wants, and has Himſelf paid down the Purchaſe of all thoſe ſpiritual and eternal Bleſſings which we receive from Him, even at the Price of that Blood, which He hath ſhed for *us miſerable Sinners*.

AND

And This indeed is a Subject ſo full of Comfort, --a Subject on which Joy and Gratitude, ſpiritual Joy and religious Gratitude muſt love to dwell, that it will, I own, be deſcending from Heaven to Earth, from the *Univerſal* Happineſs of Mankind, to one *Part* only, tho' a very *delightful* and a very *important* Part of the Chriſtian Duty; if inſtead of purſuing the primary Deſign of the Words as utter'd by the Prophet in my Text, I take the Liberty of applying them to the Purpoſe, which has now more eſpecially gather'd us together.--But the particular Occaſion muſt be my Excuſe:--nor will it perhaps need much Apology, if, with an infinite Deference to the divine Goodneſs, I borrow an Expreſſion of our Saviour's Charity to all Men, and make it ſpeak, in a lower Character, the Benevolence of Men one towards another; of the Rich and Powerful to the Poor and Indigent.

And as there is ſomething in the Words which may appear particularly applicable to the excellent Charity I am appointed to recommend to you, I have been tempted to aſſume to myſelf this Priviledge:--And it will, I hope, be an Advantage to the Charity I would recommend,--if, in the Courſe of what I ſhall ſay on the Subject, there ſhall appear, a very *diſtant* indeed, but yet an evident and pleaſing Likeneſs between the Duty we are upon, and the all-merciful Goodneſs of that Divine Being, even our bleſſed Saviour; who, tho' the great Phyſician of our Souls, yet condeſcended alſo to cure the bodily Diſeaſes and Infirmities of Men--For when *the Multitude brought their Sick unto* Jesus, *He healed them all.*

But--where ſhall we begin?--Shall we ſuppoſe that any Pains can be neceſſary, before a Chriſtian Audience, to recommend a Charity, which at the very firſt naming as an *Infirmary for the Poor*, muſt demand

demand Applauſe, and we ſhould hope Encouragement alſo, from every one that is not ſteeled againſt Compaſſion or even dead unto Humanity!--we would not willingly ſuppoſe this.

But nevertheleſs as the Claim on Charity is, in every Caſe, according to the Nature and Circumſtances of the Deſign to be furthered by it, there will be always Occaſion for ſetting them forth in as true and ſatisfactory a Manner as we may; ſince in Proportion to the Reaſonableneſs and Urgency of the Call, we are to hope the Goodneſs and Munificence of thoſe who attend to it will be exerted. And I have therefore the Satisfaction to find that ſcarce any thing more is requiſite on my Part, than the faithfully repreſenting to you the State of ſuch Matters as bear Relation to the Deſign now to be treated of; being fully convinced that when this ſhall be done, your own Goodneſs of Heart will (happily for me!) ſtand

ſtand in the Place of all perſuaſive Arts, and render them needleſs.

Now every Scheme or Deſign of Charity, as I before obſerved, ought, doubtleſs, to be attended to, in Proportion to the Nature and Circumſtances of it,--and in this Light, it *cannot*, it *ſhould* not be concealed (and moſt freely do we acknowledge it) that the moſt excellent, the *moſt* neceſſary and moſt laudable Kind of Charity is that which provides for the ſpiritual Good and the eternal Happineſs of others; ſuch as the breeding up the Children of the Poor in the Nurture of the LORD, and thereby endeavouring to reſcue them, as far as humanly we may, from Sin and Miſery;--and, to the Praiſe of this Kingdom be it ſpoken, there is thro' every Part of it ſuch a peculiar Regard paid to this religious Purpoſe, as will, we may preſume to hope, in ſome Meaſure make

At-

Attonement, thro' God's Mercy, for our many Deficiencies in other Reſpects, whatſoever they may be.

But--if *this* be entitled (as moſt undeniably it is) to the firſt Place in our Benevolence, inaſmuch as the Soul is ſo far preferable to all the World beſide; For what is a Man profited if he gain the whole World and loſe his own Soul?--Yet this, tho' the *brighteſt Part*, is very far from being the *whole* of Charity--That extends itſelf to all our Wants as well as of the Body as of the Soul.--Elſe, where would be the Force of that Reaſon which the Son of Man ſhall give for the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who ſhall ſtand at his Right-Hand in the Day of Judgment? *I was an hungered, ſhall He ſay, and ye gave me Meat, I was thirſty and ye gave me Drink---I was a Stranger and ye took me in,* and ſo on.

But, beſides This, it were almoſt endleſs to recount the ſeveral Paſſages of Scripture, wherein ſuch

Charity as relates to the temporal and worldly Conditions of our poorer Brethren, is with peculiar Enforcements recommended to us.---And in no Caſe indeed do Nature and Reaſon more readily ſubſcribe to the Dictates of the Goſpel.

To relieve the Neceſſities of thoſe who, not from any Want of Induſtry, but thro' the Lowneſs of their Station; the Number perhaps, of their helpleſs Off-ſpring, or ſome other innocent Cauſe, are poor, diſtreſſed and ſtarving.--To raiſe ſuch from the Mire and Dirt of Poverty, to an *wholeſome*, tho' it be but a *bare* Subſiſtence, and thereby to make them, comparatively at leaſt, as happy as if they were ſet among the Princes of the People.--This doubtleſs is Charity.--To comfort and ſupport ſuch as have by any unfortunate Events been reduced from a State of *Competency*, at leaſt, if not of *Affluence*, to the Hardſhips of a quite *different* Condition, for

the

the Severities of which they are neither fitted or prepared !--This doubtleſs is Charity !

To provide a Maintenance for thoſe, who, after the Vigor of a Life ſpent in honeſt Labour and Induſtry, are now, thro' Age, become incapable of continuing to ſupport themſelves.--To provide before-hand that ſuch may at length retire from the Hurry of thoſe Tranſactions, in which they are no longer able to bear a Part; and thereby to give them an Opportunity of ſpending the Evening of their Lives in preparing for *another World*, without being interrupted with the Diſtreſſes of *this* !--This doubtleſs is Charity !

THESE Things, I ſay, and Things like Theſe, are certainly Parts, and glorious ones too of Chriſtian Benevolence.---They all of them have their ſeveral Circumſtances to awaken our Concern for

 them :

them: They all have their Claims to our Pity and Compaſſion according to their ſeveral Neceſſities, and the Nature of thoſe Wants which are to be ſupplied by our Aſſiſtance.

And if theſe Things are ſo, what an Advantage muſt this give to the Cauſe of *that Charity*, which now humbly ſues for Support from your Hands?--Since the Miſery which that ſtrives to relieve, is a Want, before which all others loſe, in ſome Meaſure, the *Appearance* of Diſtreſs; it is the Want of *Health*; the Want of *That*, without which no other worldly Thing can give us Pleaſure.

The *external* Difficulties of Life we *may* ſtruggle with--tho' it be hard!--But when Pain and Sickneſs take Place,--when excruciating Pains or lingering Sickneſs debilitate and harraſs the Body,--*when the whole Head is ſick, and the whole Heart faint*, the Mind

Mind alas! muſt then be incapable of taſting ought but the bitter Draughts of its own Miſery!--In ſuch a Caſe, what are the Advantages of Fortune, of Rank, of Fame or Honour?--How beautiful, how true is the Expreſſion of the wiſe Son of *Sirach* on this Head?

"* BETTER, ſays he, is the Poor being ſound "and ſtrong of Conſtitution, than a rich Man that "is afflicted in his Body.

"HEALTH and a good State of Body are above "all Gold, and a ſtrong Body above infinite Wealth.

"THERE is no Riches above a ſound Body, and "no Joy above the Joy of the Heart.

"DEATH is better than a bitter Life, or conti-"nual Sickneſs."

THUS

ECCLES. xxxth.

THUS ſpake the Son of *Sirach*;--and who is that extraordinary Perſon, that has not in his Life-time, if of any conſiderable Length, experienced, in Part, the Truth of what he ſays?

How happy then ſhould we eſteem ourſelves, how thankful ſhould we be to the Almighty, who has in this Place, bleſſed us with thoſe ſalutary Waters, which He hath appointed to be, in ſo many Caſes, in Caſes ſo various, in Caſes ſo diſtreſsful and almoſt deſperate, an efficacious Means of removing the worſt of all wordly Afflictions, and reſtoring unto Thouſands that invaluable Bleſſing of Health, which is ſo neceſſary to every worldly Enjoyment? An Happineſs This, which does annually draw together ſuch Numbers as plainly beſpeak the Senſe they have of it.--Or, if among thoſe Numbers there be any who come not to ſeek Relief for *themſelves*, yet are there, I ſuppoſe, but very few who do not

partake

partake of it, as received either by their *Parents*, or their *Children*, their *Relations*, or their *Friends*.

WHAT a wide and ſolid Foundation then is here laid for Joy and Thankfulneſs?---But nevertheleſs, while we rejoice in this our Happineſs, a Happineſs indeed to all ſuch as by their local Situation, or thro' the Sufficiency of their Circumſtances are able to procure to themſelves theſe Advantages, when they ſtand in Need thereof; yet muſt we not forget, what my preſent Purpoſe calls upon me particularly to remind you of, that however open to *ſuch* theſe Medicinal Waters may be; numberleſs notwithſtanding are the Perſons, who' thro' Diſtance or Poverty are deprived of thoſe Benefits which they might otherwiſe hope for from them!--A pitiable Caſe this!--To labour under Illneſs!--To know the Cure, or an hopeful Probability of it at leaſt, and yet thro' Indigence to be prevented from arriving at it!

BUT

But it will be argued, perhaps, that, in ſuch Caſes, the Perſons on whom the Sick or diſeaſed Man muſt neceſſarily, and by the Laws of the Land become a Burden, will be glad, at their own *Expence*, becauſe for their *own Sakes*, to remove him from themſelves, and ſo afford him a Chance for ſuch Recovery as may render him able to ſupport *himſelf*, without being any longer a Weight upon *their Circumſtances!*

This Conſideration is, I own, a juſt one.---But there will ſtill, I fear, be a great deal wanting!--- For, if the miſerable Object ſhould be thus far aſſiſted, as it is, I hope, reaſonable to ſuppoſe he might--yet, what availeth it, if when here, he ſhall ſtill be in Want of all thoſe Helps, which, on Account of his Infirmities, muſt be neceſſary for him? --And how many Things alas! are there neceſſary in ſuch a Caſe, which the Generality of Pariſhes

are

are really not able to provide?--Is not the Phyſician's Aid moſt eſſentially requiſite for the proper and effectual Application of theſe Fountains of Health?--Is there not a Delicacy of Care, a Tenderneſs of Management, an Aſſiduity of Attendance, a Peculiarity of Food neceſſary? Beſide the Aſſiſtance of what I would call the collateral Medicines calculated to aſſiſt and forward the Virtues of the Waters themſelves?--Are not theſe, I ſay, in many, nay in moſt Caſes indiſpenſably requiſite for the Safety of the Patient?--And yet to the procuring theſe, the common Courſe of Proviſion for the Poor certainly *will not*, nor indeed *can* it be *expected* to reach.--And how then ſhall they be provided?--or if not provided, what Advantage is it to the poor Lazar that he is brought even to the Brink of the Pool, if at laſt he cannot get down to partake of its Virtues?--This, methinks, does but aggravate his Miſery!--But, behold a Gleam of Comfort breaks

in upon us to enliven the Hearts of the afflicted Poor, and diſpel the Cloud that hangs over them, while Charity is heard, as it were, to aſſume the Expreſſion of my Text, and to cry aloud, *Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money; come ye buy and eat; yea buy Wine and Milk, without Money and without Price.*

SUCH ſeems to be the Language of that generous Deſign, which now recommends itſelf to your particular Attention. A Deſign ſo noble, ſo intendedly comprehenſive---The Foundation and firſt Structure of which has been laid and executed by ſuch a wonderful *Liberality* from thoſe by whom it was originally *plann'd*; and who have ever ſince been no leſs careful and liberal in their Endeavours to make it laſting as well as uſeful;--a Deſign ſo wiſely, ſo religiouſly calculated for the recovering our poorer Brethren from their Diſtreſs; the greateſt worldly

worldly Diſtreſs that we know, even from Sickneſs and Poverty; which are Evils that muſt mutually and ſeverely aggravate each other;--a Deſign ſo truly great, and ſo truly Chriſtian, that it were not eaſy, I believe, even in Imagination to frame one more worthy our Admiration, our Praiſe, or our Encouragement, becauſe there can be, I think, none more neceſſary.

Nor can I forbear to add, that not only the *Nature*, but *Management* and *Execution* of it, by thoſe who from Time to Time have preſided over and aſſiſted in the Care and Direction of it, will, if duly conſider'd, ſerve to place it in a moſt pleaſing Light.

The ſtrict Attention which all along *has* and to this Hour is paid to the ſeveral Circumſtances of thoſe who can be admitted to its Benefits--the pro-

per

per Supplies and Diſpoſal of all Things requiſite for their ſeveral Conditions---The kind, the diligent, the diſintereſted Attendance of thoſe, whoſe Learning and Experience have render'd them particularly capable of giving their Advice and Aſſiſtance, muſt be no ſmall Recommendation both of the Charity itſelf, and of thoſe who ſo generouſly ſuperintend it!

THE peculiar Tenderneſs ſhewn to the ſeveral Patients, and at the ſame Time the Regard that is paid to their moral and religious Behaviour,--the general Oeconomy in ſhort, and Management of the whole is ſo remarkable, ſo conſtant and ſo well judg'd, under the Care of Perſons whoſe Goodneſs alone and Generoſity of Spirit induces them to take that Burden upon themſelves, that if there really *was not* all that ſuperior Utility, which there certainly *is* in the Deſign itſelf, in which they are engaged; yet were it a Pity methinks, that their benevolent

nevolent Endeavours ſhould fail of receiving, not only our beſt Thanks, but our beſt Encouragement and Aſſiſtance; or that any Part of their Labour ſhould be in vain.--In vain I mean, in regard to the Deſign of the Charity, and the Advantage of our poor Brethren:--as to themſelves it can never be ſo--for the LORD will reward them--No, their Labour ſhall never be in vain in the LORD.

BUT why? it may be aſk'd, why this Appearance of Doubt? as if there could be any Reaſon to apprehend that an Inſtitution ſo well calculated for univerſal Good, could fail of ſuch Support as might be ſufficient for it.

Such a Queſtion would bring me under a diſagreeable Neceſſity of once more changing the Scene, and from the Pleaſure that ariſes from the Conſideration of there being ſo deſirable, ſo laudable a

Scheme

of Charity, not only laid and executed, but thro' a Courſe of ſome Years properly ſupported, to the Relief of great Numbers, who muſt otherwiſe, 'tis probable, have lived in Miſery, or died thro' Want. --From this pleaſing Conſideration, I ſay, I muſt, with Reluctance deſcend to the moſt unwelcome Part of the Office conſigned me, the informing you, for it is neceſſary ſo to do, that, thankful as we are for all the kind Aſſiſtance this Charity has met with, and right thankful for it we are; yet, true it is, that the frequent Calls of miſerable Objects have of late Years ſo enhanced the Expences of the Infirmary, at the ſame Time that a Deficiency in Point of annual Aid, has occaſion'd ſuch a Diminution of its Abilities to anſwer thoſe Calls, that there has ariſen an urgent and preſſing Neceſſity of not only *breaking* in upon the *Capital Fund*, on the Intereſt of which the Charity was *ultimately* to rely, but leſſening it alſo to a conſiderable Degree, and taking from

from it near a Thouſand Pounds, in little more than the ſpace of two Twelve-months!

But let it not be thought that we complain of this!--we do not complain of it: but rather attribute it to the peculiar Circumſtances of the Times, and the extraordinary Dearneſs of the chief Neceſſaries of Life, which may, thro' ſome late Seaſons, have produced many other *unuſual* Claims on the Benevolence of the Good and Charitable;--we would attribute it to any Thing, to any uncommon or unknown Contingencies, rather than to a falling off of Good-will in thoſe, who are acquainted with the extenſive Uſefulneſs of this Inſtitution, the good Effects it can already boaſt of, and the Proſpect of future Relief which it promiſes to the Poor and Miſerable, as long as it ſhall meet with ſuch Aſſiſtance as it preſumes to hope for.

To

To *hope* for, did I ſay? Nay, to *promiſe* itſelf.--Confident, that now, when it has pleaſed God to turn our Scarcity (whether natural or artificial) into a plentiful Abundance;--when He *hath crowned the Year with his Mercy, and his Clouds have dropped Fatneſs, ſo that the Hills have rejoiced on every ſide, and the Valleys have ſtood ſo thick with Corn that*, in the Pſalmiſt's Phraſe, *they have rejoic'd and ſung; when our Garners are full and plenteous with all Manner of Store*;--it can never be, but that the preſent diminiſhed Eſtate of this glorious Charity will be abundantly renewed by ſuch an Encreaſe of Subſcribers to it (as well occaſional as annual) as may reſtore it to its former Ability, and render it capable of extending its Influence to its wonted Limits.

Such is our Truſt, ſuch is our Confidence in *your* Goodneſs:--and in return for that Goodneſs, will the thankful Poor, ſtill *looking up unto the Hills whence*

whence cometh their Help, continually ſend up their Prayers for you to the Throne of Grace; and *He* who ſitteth thereon, and heareth the Supplications of the Poor and Needy ſhall pour down upon your Heads the Abundance of his Bleſſings--Even ſo O heavenly Father, may it ſeem Good in thy Sight--to whom with the Son and Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Power and Might, Adoration, Praiſe and Thankſgiving both now and for evermore!

F I N I S.

10 JA 66

F I N I S.